MITCHELL J. LANDRIEU, MAYOR

CITY OF NEW ORLEANS

November 7, 2013

Dear Madame Clerk:

The New Orleans tourism industry provides nearly 80,000 jobs and generates over \$6 billion in spending in our economy. For too long, taxicabs had been cited as an impediment to attracting new businesses, conventions, major events, and leisure travelers to New Orleans. Local residents regularly expressed major concerns about reliability, vehicle appearance, and safety.

For these reasons, we rolled up our sleeves and dedicated a considerable amount of time to update the standards for local taxicabs. Taxi riders in our city today experience vastly improved customer service. The process was exhaustive and inclusive, with over three dozen meetings with taxi drivers, CPNC holders, business and hospitality industry leaders, and interested citizens. With the help of the New Orleans City Council, we passed sweeping reforms in 2012 that resulted in cleaner, newer and more reliable cabs on the streets of New Orleans.

A major piece of the taxicab reform package was a requirement of taxicab vehicles to be seven years of age or less, a standard that was in the middle of our peer cities. As a compromise in 2012, the 7-year maximum age requirement was set for January 1, 2014 to give additional time for owners to buy new cabs.

To date, over 75% of our city's taxicabs are already in compliance with this 7-year maximum age requirement. Our residents and visitors have the benefit today of cabs equipped with GPS navigation and credit card machines. Accessible taxis for people with disabilities are coming online. Cameras required by the reform have improved safety for drivers and customers. And many drivers have realized their dream of holding their own license and running their own business.

To delay the 7-year maximum age requirement puts small business owners and CPNC holders who have complied at a competitive disadvantage. Over 1200 taxicabs that now deliver a world-class first impression of our city to our residents and visitors would be impacted by this ordinance. Rolling back or delaying any taxicab reforms sends the wrong message. New Orleans deserves clean, safe, reliable and accessible taxicabs.

We now have common-sense reforms in place that have modernized the taxicab experience and improved taxicab passenger and driver safety in New Orleans. The taxicab reforms debated and passed were then, and continue now to be, essential to the continued growth of our city and how we are perceived. For these reasons and on behalf of the nearly 80,000 people working in the cultural economy and the 75% of taxicabs that have already embraced the reforms, I am vetoing Ordinance #025561.

Sincerely

Mitchell J. Landrieu

Mayor, City of New Orleans